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**The relationship between
Mahāsāṃghikas and Mahāyāna Buddhism
indicated in the colophon of the Chinese translation of
the *Vinaya* of the Mahāsāṃghikas***

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(1) The origin of the Chinese translation of the *Vinaya* of the Mahāsāṃghikas¹

In the report on his journey to India, Faxian (法顯 337~422 C.E.) describes how he saw the manuscript of the *Vinaya* in Pātaliputra and copied it:

²From that realm of Vārāṇasī, he went east back to Pātaliputra. Faxian originally sought the *Vinaya* (texts), but, in the countries of North India, they had been transmitted orally from master to master and (therefore), there was no text to be copied. That is why he went so far, until he came to Central India (Madhyadeśa), where he obtained a *Vinaya* text in a Mahāyāna *sāṅghārāma* (i.e. monastery). That was the *Vinaya* of the Mahāsāṃghikas, which the whole Community had followed, from the beginning (of its history), when the Buddha was still alive in the world. Its original text was handed down in the Jetavana Monastery. The other eighteen schools have their own traditions, which are essentially the same and do not differ from one another. There are, however, minor differences, some of which resulted from adopting and rejecting (themes in the *Vinaya*). However, this (i.e. the *Vinaya* of the Mahāsāṃghikas) is the most detailed and complete. He also acquired an excerpt of a *Vinaya*, comprising of (a number of characters corresponding to) about seven thousand (*Śloka*-) verses (i.e. 32 characters × 7,000 = 224,000 characters); this is the *Vinaya* of the Sarvāsti-(vādins), which monks in China are following. (This text) has been handed down also from master to master orally, (and) never written down in letters. Furthermore, he obtained the **Samyukta-abhidharma-hṛdaya(sāstra)* (雜阿毘曇心), comprising about six thousand verses (i.e. 32 characters × 6,000 = 192,000

* This article is based on Appendix II of my German monograph on the *Abhisamācārikā Dharmāḥ*, Abhis III 567~574. I am very grateful to Peter Lait, Susan Roach and Aneesah Nishaat, who went to great trouble to check my English. This work was supported by JSPS KAKENHI Grant Numbers 17K02219, 16K02172 and 26284026.

¹ Cf. BhiVin(Ma-L), pp. If.

² T. 51, no. 2085, 864b16~29. 從彼波羅捺國東行還到巴連弗邑。法顯本求戒律。而北天竺諸國皆師師口傳無本可寫。是以遠涉乃至中天竺。於此摩訶衍僧伽藍得一部律。是摩訶僧祇衆律。佛在世時最初大眾所行也。於祇洹精舍傳其本。自餘十八部各有師資。大歸不異。然小小不同。或用開塞。但此最是廣說備悉者。復得一部抄律可七千偈。是薩婆多衆律。即此秦地衆僧所行者也。亦皆師師口相傳授。不書之於文字。復於此衆中得《雜阿毘曇心》可六千偈。又得一部經二千五百偈。又得一卷《方等般泥洹經》可五千偈。又得摩訶僧祇阿毘曇。故法顯住此三年。學梵書、梵語。寫律。

characters) in the same community (in the Mahāyāna monastery); he acquired one scripture, comprising two thousand five hundred verses (i.e. 32 characters × 2,500 = 80,000 characters) too; he acquired also the *Vaitulya-Parinirvāṇa-sūtra* (i.e. the Mahāyāna *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*), comprising about five thousand verses (i.e. 32 characters × 5,000 = 160,000 characters); he obtained the *Abhidharma(piṭaka?)* of the Mahāsāṃghikas as well. Hence, Faxian remained there for three years (and) learnt the *Brahma* script, the *Brahma* language and copied the *Vinaya* (texts).

Faxian reached Pāṭaliputra in 405 C.E. and remained there for three years. After returning to China, he, together with a native-born North Indian, namely Buddhabhadra (359~429 C.E.), translated the *Vinaya* of the Mahāsāṃghikas into Chinese. In the colophon to this translation (T. 22, no. 1425, 548a29~b25), he writes as follows³:

Once an evil king reigned in Central India for a short period of time. The śramaṇas fled in all directions in order to escape from him, and the monks, who (had mastered) the “three baskets” (*Tripiṭaka*), scattered. When the poor evil (king) died, a good king came to the throne. He requested the śramaṇas to return to the land and he worshipped them.

At that time, in the city of Pāṭaliputra, there lived five hundred monks and they wanted to make a judgement (*duanshi* 斷事; *viniścaya*), but there were neither *Vinaya* experts (i.e. *Vinayadhara*), *Vinaya*-texts nor transmitted precedents. Therefore, they sent somebody to the Jetavana Monastery, where he copied a *Vinaya* text, which has survived until today. Faxian (i.e. I) copied this *Brahma* (i.e. Sanskrit) text (梵本)⁴ in the Devarāja Monastery (*Tianwang jingshe* 天王精舍), south of the *stūpa* of King Aśoka in the city of Pāṭaliputra in the land of Magadha.

Having returned to Yangzhou (揚州) (in China), I started translating it (into Chinese) in the 11th month of the 12th year of the (era) of Yixi (義熙) of the Jin (Dynasty) in the year *bingchen* (of the sixty-year cycle, i.e. 416 C.E.) in the Douchang Monastery (鬪場寺)⁵ and completed the whole (translation) by the end of the 2nd month of the 14th year (i.e. 418 C.E.). Together with a Chan master (*chanshi* 禪師) (namely, Buddhabhadra), I translated the *Brahma* (i.e. Sanskrit) text into Chinese. I write these explicitly (*gu* 故).⁶

³ Cf. BhiVin(Ma-L), p. II.

⁴ Some editions read *hu* 胡 instead of *fan* 梵. This change can be found everywhere in Buddhist texts. Some scholars have suggested implausibly that *fan* 梵 means *Brāhmī* script, while *hu* 胡 means *Kharoṣṭī* script. *Hu* 胡 means “people or things from Northern and Western countries (as seen from China), including India.” In the Tang Period, *hu* 胡 designated almost exclusively Sogdian. In Chinese Buddhist texts, *fan* 梵 seems to mean “Sanskrit” or “traditional Indian”, while *hu* 胡 means generally “Indian” (also “Central Asian”). Consequently, *fanyu* 梵語 and *huyu* 胡語 mean “Sanskrit” and “Indian language”, respectively; and *fanben* 梵本 and *huben* 胡本 mean “Sanskrit text” and “Indian text”, respectively. Thus, there is a small but not a significant difference between these two expressions.

⁵ *Douchang si* 鬪場寺 is identical to the famous monastery *Daochang si* 道場寺; see Deeg 2005: 26. This colophon is quoted in Sengyou (僧祐 445~518 C.E.)’s *Chusanzangji Ji* (出三藏記集 [Collection of Records on the Translations of the *Tripiṭaka*]; T. 55, no. 2145, 510~518 C.E.), where the name of *Daochang si* 道場寺 (21a9) is found instead of *Douchang si* 鬪場寺.

⁶ 摩訶僧祇律私記：中天竺昔時，暫有惡王御世。諸沙門避之四奔。三藏比丘星離。惡王既死，更有善王。還請諸沙門還國，供養。時巴連弗邑有五百僧，欲斷事，而無律師，又無律文，無所承案。即遣人到祇洹精舍。寫得律本于今傳賞。法顯於摩竭提國巴連弗邑阿育王塔南天王精舍寫得梵(v.l. 胡)本。還楊州，以晉(v.l. -)義熙十二年歲在丙辰十一(v.l. 十)月，於鬪場寺出之。至十四年二月末都訖。共禪師譯

The colophon in question, which further describes the tradition of the Buddha's teaching and the emergence of different schools⁷, was, in my opinion, indeed written by Faxian, himself. In particular, the expression *gujizhi* 故記之("I write these explicitly") confirms the authenticity. This colophon, which is also quoted in *Sengyou* (僧祐 445~518 C.E.)'s *Chusanzangji Ji* (出三藏記集 [Collection of Records on the Translations of the *Tripiṭaka*]; T. 55, no. 2145, 510~518 C.E.) in a modified form (20c25~21a10), is very important for the study of the history of Buddhism, especially the relationship between the school of the Mahāsāṃghikas and so-called Mahāyāna Buddhism. The information, which indicates that the original manuscript of this *Vinaya* of the Mahāsāṃghikas was actually handed down in the Jetavana Monastery, is also confirmed by Faxian's following note at the end of the fourth chapter of the commentaries on the *pācattika* rules in his translation of this *Vinaya* text. There, the summary (*uddāna*) ends with the sentence: "The last one is (the commentary on the 40th *pācattika*, namely) eating in a group (*gaṇabhojana*)".⁸ Nevertheless, there is no commentary on this *pācattika* rule in the Chinese translation. Instead, a note written in small characters is inserted: "The Sanskrit text in the Jetavana Monastery was eaten

梵(v.l. 胡)本(v.l. -)爲秦焉。故記之。

⁷ T. 22, no. 1425, 548b9~25. 佛泥洹後，大迦葉集律藏，爲大師宗，具持八萬法藏。大迦葉滅[v.l. 滅度]後，次尊者阿難亦具持八萬法藏，次尊者末田地亦具持八萬法藏，次尊者舍那婆斯亦具持八萬法藏，次尊者優波崛(v.l. 掘)多，世尊記無相佛，如降魔因緣中說，而不(= v.l.] ←亦)能具持八萬法藏。於是遂有五部名生。初曇摩崛(v.l. 掘)多別爲一部。次彌沙塞別爲一部。次迦葉維復爲一部。次薩婆多——“薩婆多”者，晉言“說一切有”。所以名一切有者，自上諸部義宗各異，薩婆多者言：“過去、未來、現在、中陰各自有性。”，故名一切有。於是，五部並立，紛然競起。各以自義爲是。時阿育王言：“我今何以測其是非？”於是，問僧佛法斷事云何？皆言：“法應從多。”王言：“若爾者，當行籌，知何衆多。”於是，行籌。取本衆籌者甚多。以衆多故，故名摩訶僧祇。摩訶僧祇者，大衆名(v.l. -)也。(After the Buddha's [entering *pari-nirvāṇa*, Mahākāśyapa gathered together the collection of monastic rules and became the great master, holding the whole collection of the eight thousand teachings. After Mahākāśyapa's death, as his successor, Venerable Ānanda, as well, held the whole collection of the eight thousand teachings; as his successor, Venerable Madhyāntika, as well, held the whole collection of the eight thousand teachings; as his successor, Venerable Śāṇavāsin, as well, held the whole collection of the eight thousand teachings; his successor, Venerable Upagupta, whom the Lord had predicted to become a *buddha* but without the [thirty-two] marks [characteristic of a *buddha*] — as related in the story concerning the defeat of Māra, however, could not hold the whole collection of the eight thousand teachings. Thereupon, the names of the five groups [*nikāyas*] came to exist. Firstly, the Dharmaguptakas became one group; then, the Mahīśāsakas became one group; then, the Kāśyapīyas became one group; then, the Sarvāsti[vādin]s — “Sarvāsti” meaning “maintaining that all [things] exist”. The reason why it was named “all [things] exist” is as follows: the doctrines of the above-mentioned groups differed from one another, [and] the Sarvāsti[vādin]s maintained that each of the past, future, present [*dharma*s] and intermediate existences [*antarābhava*] had its own definitive nature [*svabhāva*]. Therefore, it was named “[maintaining that] all [things] exist”. Thereupon, the five groups co-existed, disputing one another, [and] each believed its own doctrine as being right. At that time, King Aśoka thought: “How can I judge which one is right or wrong?” Thereupon, he asked the Community how a judgement should be made, according to the Buddha's rule. All said: “According to the law, [we] should follow the majority [rule].” The king said: “If so, [voting by] distributing tickets should be carried out to know which [group] is in the majority.” Thereupon, tickets were distributed. Those, who took the tickets of the group in question, were great in number. Because of its being extremely many, [the group] was named “Mahāsāṃghika”. “Mahāsāṃghika” means “a great multitude”).

Concerning the lineage of the great masters, down to Upagupta, cf. Strong 1992: 57ff.

⁸ T. 22, no. 1425, 362b23. 別衆食在後。In the *Vinaya* texts of other schools, there is an explanation to this rule, such as Vin IV 71~75.

by insects (or small animals). (Therefore,) the rule concerning eating in a group is missing.⁹ This statement must have come from Faxian, himself.

Concerning this Mahāyāna monastery and the followers of Mahāyāna in Pāṭaliputra, Faxian reports in his travelogue as follows:

A brahmin, namely *Lâ tâ si bwâ mi* (羅汰私婆迷; ...*svāmī?*), who is a Mahāyāna follower, lives in this city. He is very astute, very learned, and there is nothing he does not understand, and he lives in purity. The king worships him as his teacher. When (the king) goes to (him) to offer greetings, (the king) dares not sit next to him. If the king touches his hand out of affection and reverence, the brahmin immediately washes it. He is about fifty years old or more and people in the whole country revere him. Thanks to this singular person's propagation of the Buddha's teachings, heretics have no chance of humiliating the Buddhist Community.

On one side of the *stūpa* of King Aśoka, the Mahāyāna *saṅghārāma* (摩訶衍僧伽藍; "Mahāyāna Monastery") was built, which is very magnificent. (Nearby?) there is a Hīnayāna monastery, where, in total, there are six to seven hundred monks, whose conduct is refined and elegant. *Śramaṇas* of eminent virtue and scholars from the four directions, who seek the doctrines (of the Buddha's teachings), visit this monastery.

The master of the (above-mentioned) brahmin, who is named after Mañjuśrī and is venerated by all *śramaṇas* of eminent virtue and monks of the Mahāyāna in this country, also lives in this *saṅghārāma* (i.e. monastery).

Amongst all the countries in Central India (*Madhyadeśa*), this (capital) city of the country is the greatest. The people are very rich and compete with one another in charity and justice. Every year, on the 8th day of the second month, there is a procession with (Buddha) images. (People) make four-wheeled floats (mounted) with five-storied (decorations), made from braided bamboo ... Each looks like a *stūpa* ... On all four sides (of the platforms of the floats), niches are made. In each (niche), there is a seated Buddha (statue), which is flanked by (two) *bodhisatvas*. There are around twenty of these floats. ... The (above-mentioned) brahmin comes and invites the Buddha (i.e. the Buddha images). (The floats) with the Buddha (images) enter the city one after another. Once they enter the city, they remain there for two nights. Throughout the night, people worship them by burning lamps, dancing and music.¹⁰

It is very significant that Faxian copied the manuscript of the Mahāsāṃghikas' *Vinaya* in a Mahāyāna monastery namely the Devarāja Monastery where Mahāyāna monks were living. As we have seen above, this *Vinaya* manuscript had been brought from the Jetavana Monastery to Pāṭaliputra not to be preserved in the library there, but in order to make

⁹ T. 22, no. 1425, 362b24. 祇洹精舍中梵(v.l. 胡)本蟲噉，脫無此別衆食戒。

¹⁰ T. 51, no. 2085, 862b2~21. 有一大乘婆羅門子名羅汰私<婆>迷，住此城裏。爽悟多智，事無不達。以清淨自居。國王宗敬師事，若往問訊，不敢並坐。王設以愛敬心執手，執手已，婆羅門輒自灌洗。年可五十餘，舉國瞻仰。賴此一人弘宣佛法，外道不能得加陵衆僧。於阿育王塔邊造摩訶衍僧伽藍，甚嚴麗。亦有小乘寺，都合六七百僧衆，威儀庠序可觀，四方高德沙門及學問人，欲求義理皆詣此寺。婆羅門子師亦名文殊師利，國內大德沙門、諸大乘比丘皆宗仰焉，亦住此僧伽藍。凡諸中國，唯此國城邑為大。民人富盛，競行仁義。年年常以建卯月八日行像。作四輪車縛竹作五層。... 其狀如塔。..... 四邊作龕，皆有坐佛菩薩立侍。可有二十車。... 婆羅門子來請佛。佛次第入城。入城內再宿。通夜然燈伎樂供養。

judgements for the Community. From all these facts, we may conclude that the Mahāyāna monks in the Devarāja Monastery in Pāṭaliputra belonged to the Mahāsāṃghika school as well, and that this monastery was a Mahāsāṃghika-cum-Mahāyāna monastery. Presumably, other Mahāyāna monks in this kingdom, who worshipped master Mañjuśrī of that monastery, were also Mahāsāṃghikas. In the passage quoted above, Faxian referred to a Hīnayāna monastery in contrast to this Mahāyāna(-cum-Mahāsāṃghika) *saṅghārāma*. The former must have belonged to a school other than that of the Mahāsāṃghikas. In his travelogue, Faxian writes that, in Pāṭaliputra, there was also an orally-transmitted text of a *Vinaya* of the Sarvāstivadins, comprising (a number of characters corresponding to) about seven thousand (*śloka*-) verses (i.e. the length of which corresponds to about seven-eighths of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-Prajñāpāramitā*). He was somehow able to acquire its written version or more probably, he wrote down this orally-transmitted text in that very Hīnayāna monastery. It is evident that this monastery belonged to the Sarvāstivadins.

(2) The Mahāsāṃghikas and the followers of Mahāyāna Buddhism

The Devarāja Monastery in Pāṭaliputra is also mentioned in the colophon to Faxian's translation of the Mahāyāna *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*. As Faxian writes in his travelogue, he had obtained a manuscript of this *sūtra* in Pāṭaliputra as well. Unfortunately, the original colophon is lost. However, it is quoted in Sengyou's *Chusanzangji Ji* 出三藏記集 (Collection of Records on the Translations of the *Tripitaka*), as mentioned above, though it is likely that the quotation is the result of Sengyou's revision as in the case of the above-cited colophon to the *Vinaya* of the Mahāsāṃghikas. The quoted colophon reads as follows:

¹¹No. 18: Report on the (*Mahā*)*Parinirvāṇa*-(*sūtra*), (consisting) of six scrolls, quoted from the colophon to the scripture

When, in the Devarāja Monastery (*Tianwang jingshe* 天王精舍), south of the *stūpa* of King Aśoka in the city of Pāṭaliputra in the land of Magadha, an *upāsaka* (lay follower), (named) *Gja-lā-sien* (伽羅先) met the Chinese monk, Shi Faxian (i.e. me), who had travelled from afar to this country in search of the Dharma, he was deeply moved and, thereupon, copied this “Great *Parinirvāṇa-sūtra*, the secret treasure of the Tathāgata” for (me). He wished that this scripture be spread to China and that all living beings attain one and the same Dharma-body of the Tathāgata.

On the first (day) of the 10th month of the 13th year of the (era of) Yixi 義熙 (i.e. 417 C.E.), (we) began to translate this *Vaitulya-Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* in the Daochang Monastery (道場寺), founded by the Minister for Construction (*sikong* 司空), (namely) Xie Shi 謝石 (327~388 C.E.) and completed the revision (of the text) on the second day of the first month of the 14th year (of the era of Yixi). (On that day,) Chan master Buddhabhadra (359~429/430 C.E.) took the Indian text in his hands and Baoyun 寶雲 (376~449/450 C.E.) translated (the text recited by Buddhabhadra). At that time, two hundred and fifty people were sitting (there).

¹¹ T. 55, no. 2145, 60b2~11. 「六卷泥洹記」第十八 出經後記：摩竭提國，巴連弗邑，阿育王塔，天王精舍，優婆塞伽羅先見晉土道人釋法顯遠遊此土，爲求法故，深感其人。即爲寫此《大般泥洹經如來祕藏》，願令此經流布晉土，一切衆生悉成平等如來法身。義熙十三年十月一日，於謝司空石所立道場寺，出此《方等大般泥洹經》。至十四年正月二(v.l. 一)日校定盡訖。禪師佛大跋陀手執胡(v.l. 梵)本，寶雲傳譯。于時，坐有二百五十人。

This colophon is very important for the research of the origin and transmission of this Mahāyāna scripture. It is particularly interesting and significant that a lay devotee of the Mahāsāṃghika-cum-Mahāyāna monastery, namely the Devarāja Monastery, copied the manuscript of this scripture for Faxian. Although the colophon says nothing about where the manuscript had been preserved, the fact that not a monk but rather a lay follower copied this scripture, whose content was radical and critical of the authorities of the Community¹², shows that the manuscript had been kept not in the monastery but in a lay follower's private collection. This assumption is supported by another travelogue by Zhimeng 智猛(~454 C.E.). According to his biography, this Chinese monk departed Chang'an 長安 in 404 C.E., visited Kashmir, Magadha, Kapilavastu and even South India, and took the way back to China in 424 C.E. Around 433 C.E., he reached Dunhuang and in the same year, in Liangzhou 涼州, he translated the same Mahāyāna *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* into Chinese. He wrote a travelogue, called *Youxing Waiguo zhuan* 遊行外國傳 [A Report on Travels in Foreign Countries], which is now lost, but must have been very well known, because it is mentioned even in the literature catalogue of the official history of the Sui Dynasty, namely the *Suishu Jingjizhi* 隋書經籍志 (636 C.E.). Although, unfortunately, Zhimeng's translation of the Mahāyāna *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*, consisting of 20 scrolls, is lost, the part of his travelogue, in which the manuscript of the text is mentioned, is quoted in Sengyou's *Chusanzangji Ji* 出三藏記集 (510~518 C.E.) as follows:

¹³No. 19: Report on the (*Mahā*)*Parinirvāṇa*-(*sūtra*), (consisting) of twenty scrolls, quoted from Zhimeng (智猛; ~454 C.E.)'s "A Report on Travels in Foreign Countries" (*You Waiguo Zhuan* 遊外國傳)

Zhimeng's biography says: In the land of Vaiśālī, the *Mahāyāna* and *Hīnayāna* are studied separately. From the city of Dili 帝利 (?), (Zhimeng) arrived in the city of Pāṭaliputra. There lived a brahmin who had numerous relatives. He was by nature very astute, devoted to the *Mahāyāna* and, having read (*Mahāyāna*?) texts extensively, was completely versed in everything. In his house, there was a silver *stūpa*, which was 8 *chi* 尺 long, 8 *chi* wide and 3 *zhang* 丈 high (i.e. approximately $2.6 \times 2.6 \times 10$ m). In the niches on its four sides, there were silver statues, which were about 3 *chi* 尺 high (i.e. about 1 m). He owned many (manuscripts) of *Mahāyāna* *sūtras* and worshipped them in various ways. The brahmin asked Zhimeng where he came from. He replied that he came from China. (The brahmin) asked whether *Mahāyāna* was being studied in China or not. (Zhimeng) replied: "Only the *Mahāyāna* is studied there." (The brahmin) was amazed and said in deepest admiration: "Wonderful! Doesn't it mean that *bodhisatvas* have gone there to teach (the people)?" Zhimeng then obtained an Indian manuscript of the (*Mahā*)*Parinirvāṇa*-(*sūtra*) in his house. Having returned (to China), he translated (this *sūtra*) in 20 scrolls in Liangzhou 涼州.

¹² Cf. Karashima 2007, esp. 76f.

¹³ T. 55, no. 2145, 60b12~22. 「二十卷泥洹記」 第十九 出智猛《遊外國傳》 《智猛傳》云：毘耶離國有大小乘學不同。帝利城次華氏邑。有婆羅門，氏族甚多。其稟性敏悟，歸心大乘，博覽衆典，無不通達。家有銀塔，縱廣八尺，高三丈，四龕銀像高三尺餘。多有大乘經，種種供養。婆羅門問猛言：“從何來？” 答言：“秦地來。” 又問：“秦地有大乘學不？” 即答：“皆大乘學。” 其乃驚愕，雅歎云：“希有。將非菩薩往化耶？” 智猛即就其家得泥洹胡(v.l.梵)本，還於涼州出得二十卷。

The above-quoted report concerning Pāṭaliputra by Faxian and Zhimeng's travelogue were amalgamated in Zhimeng's biography.¹⁴ According to this biography, Faxian had received his manuscript of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* in the house of the same brahmin as Zhimeng received another copy of the same scripture; and Zhimeng acquired a manuscript of the *Vinaya* of the Mahāsāṃghikas as well. This information does not appear very credible. However, if one considers that Zhimeng visited Pāṭaliputra only about ten years after Faxian, it is not impossible that the lay follower, who had given Faxian the manuscript, was the same brahmin, from whom Zhimeng obtained another manuscript, or one of his relatives.

The Devarāja Monastery in Pāṭaliputra is mentioned as well in a *Vinaya* text of the Mahāsāṃghikas, namely the *Shelifu wen jing* 舍利弗問經 (*Śāriputra-pariprcchā; T. 24, no. 1465). In this text, the Buddha said to Śāriputra as follows:

A certain son of a noble man, named *Puṇyatara, who had accumulated good deeds from his previous lives and had been reborn into a brahmin family, wished to leave his home and practise the supreme (Buddha-)Path. He followed Mahāmaudgalyāyaṇa and asked him for ordination (as a monk) at the Devarāja Monastery (*Tianwang jingshe* 天王精舍) in Pāṭaliputra.¹⁵

Funayama¹⁶ had studied this text thoroughly and concluded that this *Vinaya* text is not a genuine translation from an Indian original, but rather a fabrication created in China, definitely after Faxian's translation of the *Vinaya* of the Mahāsāṃghikas, as the name of "Devarāja Monastery" was borrowed from the colophon of Faxian's translation of the *Vinaya* cited above. Funayama also doubts its authenticity as a *Vinaya* text of the Mahāsāṃghikas from the fact that the Bodhisatva Mañjuśrī is mentioned at the end of the text and the expression *zhufo* 諸佛 ("many [simultaneously living] buddhas") occurs also in the same text, both of which are elements characteristic of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

However, this conventional and stereotypical way of asserting a sharp distinction between the Hīnayāna-school(s) and the Mahāyāna, does not correspond with reality. What the above-cited reports and the colophons indicate is, rather, a symbiosis of the Mahāsāṃghikas and the followers of Mahāyāna Buddhism (at least) in Pāṭaliputra. This symbiosis is illustrated clearly in the case of the aforementioned Master Mañjuśrī, who dwelt in the Devarāja Monastery, whose monks were Mahāsāṃghikas, and was revered by all the Mahāyāna monks in the country. At the same time, a lay follower of the same monastery copied a manuscript of the Mahāyāna *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* just for Faxian. Such symbiosis may have easily led to a close relationship between the Mahāsāṃghikas and Mahāyāna Buddhism, as reflected in the above-mentioned *Śāriputra-pariprcchā¹⁷.

¹⁴ T. 55, no. 2145, 113c6, 9; T. 50, no. 2059, 343c2. This biography is quoted in the later catalogues of the Buddhist Canon: T. 55, no. 2154. 521c27f., 522a2f.; T. 55, no. 2157, 818c7f., 10f.

¹⁵ T. 24, no. 1465, 902b4~7: 佛言：“有長者子，名曰分若多羅，宿有善根，生婆羅門家，樂欲捨家，修無上道。隨大目犍連，於巴連弗邑天王精舍，求受具戒。

¹⁶ Funayama 2007: 97f.

¹⁷ The close relationship between the Mahāsāṃghikas and the Mahāyāna in Pāṭaliputra is demonstrated also by the following description in Xuanchang (玄暢; 416~484 C.E.)'s biography of Harivarman (ca. 250~350 C.E.), the author of the **Satyasiddhiśāstra* (or **Tattvasiddhi*; *Chengshilun* 成實論; T. 32, no. 1646): "At that time, monks of the Mahāsāṃghikas, who were dwelling in Pāṭaliputra, all followed the Mahāyāna, considering it to be the basis of the five schools (五部; *pañca nikāyāḥ*)" from a quotation in Sengyou's *Chusanzangji Ji* 出三藏記集

Such a symbiosis existed probably not only in Pāṭaliputra but also in other places, as the Schøyen Collection illustrates, which contains many fragments of Buddhist manuscripts in Sanskrit and Gāndhārī, including various Mahāyāna texts such as the *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka-sūtra*, *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā*, *Samādhirāja-sūtra*, side-by-side with many fragments of the *Vinaya* of the *Mahāsāṃghika-(Lokottaravādin)s*¹⁸. These fragments come from Bamiyan, where, according to Xuanzang's travelogue, there were dozens of monasteries, in which several thousand monks of the (Mahāsāṃghika-)Lokottaravādins were living.¹⁹

After ordination, a monk had to and still has to follow the monastic rules of one of the *Vinayas* of the Theravādins, Sarvāstivādins, Mūlasarvāstivādins, Mahīśasakas, Mahāsāṃghikas, Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravādins, Dharmaguptakas, Kāsyapīyas etc. and to participate in a recitation of the *Prātimokṣa*, held on each full and new moon day (*uposatha*, *poṣadha*, *posatha*). Therefore, there was, in principle, no Mahāyāna “monk” in the monastic legal sense. However, one, who was ordained in any of the schools and followed its *Vinaya*, was allowed, theoretically, to read Mahāyāna scriptures and follow their teachings as long as the monk followed his *Vinaya* and participated in the activities of the Community. The composers of these Mahāyāna scriptures must, therefore, as long as they were Buddhist monks, have been ordained in one of the *Vinaya* traditions and participated in the *Prātimokṣa*-recitation. Mahāyāna scriptures such as the *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka*, the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā*, *Samādhirāja-sūtra* etc., obviously criticise the theories of the Pudgalavādins and Sarvāstivādins²⁰. Therefore, the composers of these scriptures could not have been members of those schools. In my recent article (Karashima 2015), I have assumed that these sutras were composed by Mahāsāṃghika monks. Faxian reported that the highly revered Mahāyāna Master Mañjuśrī lived in a Mahāsāṃghika monastery, which means that the master followed the tradition of the Mahāsāṃghikas and participated in the recitation of the *Prātimokṣa* of that school. Presumably, there were monasteries of the Mahāsāṃghika school, where Mahāsāṃghika-cum-Mahāyāna monks lived, who strove not for the ideal of traditional Arhatship but for the Buddha's wisdom (*buddha-jñāna*). Supposedly, there were also monasteries of this school, where Mahāyāna followers, both monks and laymen, were present. This could be the reason why the Devarāja Monastery of this school was called *Mahāyāna-saṅghārāma* as well.

(3) Devarāja = Chandragupta II ?

The word *tianwang* 天王 (“heavenly king”) in *Tianwang jingshe* 天王精舍 can only be a translation of Sanskrit *devarāja*. This word, meaning “king of the gods”, is commonly found in Indian literature. In the early Hindu pantheon, this title was attributed to Indra, but in

(T. 55, no. 2145, 79a12f. 時有僧祇部僧，住巴連弗邑，並遵奉大乘。云是五部之本。).

¹⁸ These fragments have been edited and published in part in BMSC I~IV. Moreover, an incomplete manuscript of the *Prātimokṣasūtra* of the Mahāsāṃghika-(Lokottaravādin)s was discovered in Bamiyan (cf. Karashima 2008, 2013).

¹⁹ T. 51, no. 2087, 873b4f. 梵衍那國 伽藍數十所，僧徒數千人，宗學小乘說出世部。

²⁰ I am now preparing an article on this topic; cf. Karashima 2015.

relatively later South Indian inscriptions, it was attributed to Śiva or Viṣṇu²¹. However, *devarāja*, meaning “a god-like king” — regarding a king as a living god on Earth, occurs at least in two Sanskrit inscriptions²².

A copper inscription, unearthed in Northern Afghanistan (Bactria) and dating back to the end of the fifth century, now preserved in the Schøyen Collection, Norway, gives a list of donors for the building of a *stūpa*. Among them, a list of the kings of the White Huns (i.e. Alchon Huns and Hephthalites), namely Khiṅgila, Toramāṇa, Javūkha etc., is found. King Toramāṇa is called *devarāja* in this inscription²³.

The name or the title *devarāja* also appears in an inscription on a stone railing, inscribed in 412/413 C.E. in Sanchi: *mahārājādhirāja-śrī-Candraguptasya Devarāja iti priyanām* /// (“The great king of kings, glorious Chandragupta is called ‘*devarāja*’ as a term of endearment [?]”). As the inscription is damaged after “*priyanām*”, it is not certain whether or not *devarāja* is truly an epithet of Chandragupta (or the name of one of his ministers).²⁴

When Faxian was in Pāṭaliputra (406~409 C.E.), Chandragupta II (r. 376~415²⁵) reigned over Central India. Faxian describes Pāṭaliputra as “the greatest in the countries of Central India”. Although it was not the capital of the entire Gupta Empire²⁶, it was probably the capital of the country of Magadha, one of the subordinate dominions of the Gupta Empire.

Xuanzang visited Pāṭaliputra in 630 C.E., about two hundred years after Faxian and Zhimeng, and in his travelogue, he wrote in great detail about the Aśoka *stūpa* and the monasteries in its neighbourhood. However, the Devarāja Monastery or something like that is not mentioned.²⁷ Probably, that monastery had fallen into ruins during those two hundred years.

The above-mentioned inscription in Sanchi was written in 412/413 C.E. Therefore, the Devarāja Monastery, namely “a monastery of the god-like king”, which was “very magnificent” (*shen yanli* 興嚴麗) according to Faxian’s description, had been donated perhaps by Chandragupta II, himself, (or his minister, Devarāja?), but later it became

²¹ Cf. Iwamoto 1986.

²² Cf. Abhis III 574f.; Enomoto 2013.

²³ See Melzer 2006: 274.

²⁴ Cf. IBInsc I 729, l. 8f.; Fleet 1888: The Gupta Inscriptions, p. 33, n. 6; Bhandarkar 1981: 252, n. 1. Gupta (1992: 17, 189, 297) assumes that *Devarāja* is another name for Chandragupta II, who was called *Deva* and *Deva Gupta* as well. The name *Devarāja* is found also in verse 647 of the *Mañjuśrī-Mūlakalpa*. Gupta (1992: 122, 124, 353) assumes that this is an alias of *Budha Gupta* (r. 476?~487 C.E.); cf. also Enomoto 2013: 10, n. 3.

²⁵ Cf. Willis 2005.

²⁶ The original assumption that Pāṭaliputra was the capital of the entire Gupta Empire is now doubted; see Goyal 2005: 246f. The quotations from the travel accounts of Faxian and Xuanzang, which Goyal uses as evidence for the insignificance of Pāṭaliputra, however, are problematic. As quoted above, Faxian describes the city as follows: “Amongst all the countries in Central India (*Madhyadeśa*), this (capital) city of the country is the greatest. The people are very rich and compete with one another in charity and justice.” Also, the procession of the (Buddha) images in the city, about which Faxian describes, and the 10-metre-high silver *stūpa* in the house of the brahmin, on which Zhimeng reports, both indicate the considerable wealth of the inhabitants there. Goyal quotes from Watter’s translation of Xuanzang’s report as follows: “This city had long been a wilderness save for a walled town near the Gaṅgā with about 1,000 inhabitants.” However, Xuanzang’s travelogue reads “over 1,000 families” (千餘家, i.e. perhaps up to 10,000 inhabitants; T. 50, no. 2053, 236a18) instead of “1,000 inhabitants”.

²⁷ T. 51, no. 2087, 911b14f.

dilapidated as the result of the collapse of the Gupta Empire (550 ? C.E.).

Therefore, it is not surprising at all that the above-mentioned *Shelifu wen jing* 舍利弗問經 (*Śāriputra-pariprcchā) mentions the Devarāja Monastery (*Tianwang jingshe* 天王精舍), which had indeed existed at one time. The fact that this historical name is referred to in the scripture, indicates the place and time of its composition, but this does not mean that the scripture was forged in China as Funayama maintains.²⁸

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